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CULTURAL DIRECTIONS



GOLDEN RULE DAHLIA FARM
HARLEY T. PECK & SONS
LEBANON, OHIO



CULTURAL DIRECTIONS

Dahlia Plants

A DAHLIA plant is a green growing plant about 5 to 8 inches tall with well established roots such that if set out in your garden as you would a tomato plant for instance, it will grow, develop into a good bush, bloom well and produce a clump of good roots for the following season's planting.

These plants are produced by placing strong dahlia roots on the greenhouse bench about March 1st to 15th in a suitable growing medium, and, when sprouts have grown to a proper stage, separating them from the roots by cutting or breaking them off so as to include the "heel" of the sprout. This insures a normal growth.

Dahlia plants are becoming more popular each season, not only because they afford a more economical method of purchasing medium to high priced novelties, but also because when properly cared for and grown in well nourished soil they are just as vigorous or more so than roots and produce just as good or better flowers and, if nourished properly, good clumps.

The dahlia plants offered by Golden Rule Farm are the same as used annually by us to the extent of about fifty per cent or more of our total plantings. The root system is developed to a degree such that in an early drought as in 1930 and 1933, the tops may be even burnt off by the heat and yet later the plant will sprout from the root and produce satisfactorily.

When received the plants should either be promptly set out or placed in pots or boxes of good dirt, watered and allowed to start growth before setting. Straighen roots when setting. If plant is tall or with yellowing foliage top it severely. It has roots which will bring its growth along satisfactorily.

Planting Roots or Tubers

Best Planting Time for Dahlias in Ohio, May 1st to June 15th

A MEDIUM to smallish root makes the best clump. Cut away the tail half of a very large root before planting. Plant the root horizontally when the ground is dry enough, not less than three and one-half feet apart, four inches deep in heavy soil and five to six inches in light soil. Small flowered varieties may be planted one to two feet apart. A stake should be driven in before planting. Cover the roots, firming well. The plant should appear within a month if not, investigate and if blind (no sprout) notify the one from whom you purchased the root. Cultivate early and often until the plants show buds, then start fertilizing and disbudding. Much harm is sometimes done by cultivating deeply after plants start blooming. The fibrous root system comes close to the surface of the ground and deep cultivation cuts these roots, thus weakening the growth of the plant. After blooming starts, cultivation should not much more than scratch the surface.

Water only when urgently needed and then soak to a good depth. In case of drought after August 1st, mulch with straw, peat moss, or other litter between plants to conserve soil moisture. In a clay soil use winter's coal ashes and mix well before planting.

Disbudding

VERY few varieties have natural stems long enough for cut flowers. If you want plenty of fine cut flowers for the market, home or exhibition, disbudding is important. Start from the top and work down, don't start disbudding at the base of the plant. When in July or August the plants first show flower buds at the top, select a vigorous bud which you wish to bloom, then take off the side buds and shoots on the first two or three joints down from the selected bud. Before this bud will have developed into a flower, other branches will have grown up from beneath, and will be ready to disbud. Continue to disbud faithfully and it will repay you with **more**

Golden Rule Dahlia Farm, Lebanon, Ohio

and **better** and **larger** flowers throughout the season. Most of the varieties we offer in this catalogue will naturally produce large flowers without disbudding, but if not disbudded the later flowers may become smaller and with open centers. With faithful disbudding a constant succession of nice large blooms may be had. Cut off the old blooms as soon as the backs become unsightly. This stimulates the plant to produce new buds more rapidly and promptly.

Storing of Dahlia Roots

SOME have trouble keeping their roots over the winter. Others have no trouble at all. We believe that the greatest loss of roots is caused by their becoming over dried during the first few days or weeks after digging. We recommend that they be not dug too soon after an early frost. November 1st is normally soon enough. Watch the weather and if dry postpone digging for a while. If abnormally heavy rains start after frost, dig to avoid possible root rot. Call on us at digging time and see how we do it. It may pay you. A few lose their roots because of poor methods of digging and do not realize it.

It is not necessary to cut the tops off before digging. Dig carefully around the Dahlia plants, finally removing each clump with a good ball of earth. Cut the stem off short and dust it well with powdered sulphur or sulphur containing a little lime. Do not expose the roots for any length of time to a drying wind or sun. Prompt action in following these directions may prevent loss of roots. Store preferably in a cool basement near the floor but not in a wet place. If basement is warm, store roots as far away from heat as possible and protect the clumps by packing in peat moss, sand, ashes, leaves, or sawdust and cover the whole container well, placing it as near the floor as possible. A little sulphur mixed with packing material is good to prevent mildew. The container should be large enough to hold the clumps together with four to six inches of packing on each side, underneath and on the top.

If one has a successful method of storing Dahlia roots, we do not recommend changing. Inspection of the roots at weekly intervals during November and December will often enable one to anticipate loss.

Fertilizing

WHEN Fertilizing at planting time, take care that fertilizer does not come into contact with or near the tuber or plant.

Plant in a good productive soil. See that the soil contains each season a good proportion of humus. Rye sowed each fall after Dahlias are dug and spaded or plowed under when of suitable height in the spring will liven the soil and provide some humus. Well rotted manure is good and should be applied in the fall or winter.

Be sure to use a balanced ration of fertilizer. A 3% nitrogen, 10% Phosphate, and 6% potash (3-10-6) is an excellent formula for Dahlias, which may be used sparingly at planting, about a tablespoonful well mixed with a peck of dirt to each hill; or may be applied at three week intervals as top dressing starting in July and worked into the top soil between the plants, using about a small handful to each hill. Twenty-five pounds per season for 100 dahlias is about right.

Bone meal or wood ashes may be mixed with any fertilizer.

Dahlias require moderate Nitrogen only, not more than 3%, but will take plenty of phosphates and potash, if not applied too strongly at any one time, and will respond vigorously.

The reason for the uniformly healthy stocky growth at our farm, is balanced fertilizing, no over fertilizing and a situation open to sun and wind. The various varieties of small sucking insects also tend to shorten the growth of Dahlia bushes, and incidently, to increase the root crop. Sheltering buildings and trees, shade, rich soil, and artificial watering tend to make Dahlia bushes grow tall.

For run down soil we recommend rotted manure and fertilizer before planting; also the fertilizer top dressings as described above.

Fresh manure of any kind should not be used.

